

[Letter from Alan Lomax to Carita Doggett Corse, October 15, 1939]

October 15, 1939

Carita Doggett Corse State Supervisor Statewide Writers' Project

Dear Mrs. Corse:

Dr. Spivacke has asked me to reply to your last letter, and this gives me an opportunity I have long wished for, to write you myself about the Writers' Project folk-song work in Florida. I have looked through your record transcripts with some care, and I feel that on the whole, material is very much worth recording. The interview technique does seem to run a little slow, but I feel that the workers are in process of learning how to make documentary field recordings. This is an almost unexplored field. Sometimes an interviewer appears to interrupt the performance more often than is necessary, or to have phrased the question so that the informant was supplied with the answer thereby. In general, the objective is to get the informant to talk very freely and sometimes a few stimulating questions or remarks are better than a straight interview technique. On the whole, however, I find the material extremely interesting.

I would suggest that you continue to try to use Saffire needles. Perhaps the ones that you have had were chipped. A competent jeweler can give you help there. The \$4 repair bill will be taken care of by a library voucher as soon as possible. You might talk to the owner of the shop to inform you when the voucher arrives, so that your \$4 can be refunded. Other necessary repair bills can be sent to me direct for payment. Please do not concern yourself about the replacement of the needle.

Library of Congress

Naturally we understand the difficulties that you have faced in continuing the recording work. Let me assure you of our continued interest. It is my personal desire to be of any assistance that I can.

Very sincerely yours, Alan Lomax Assistant in Charge Archive of American Folk Songs

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